



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

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TRIBAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION

TCR 576
Natural Resources

i?_siwłk^w sx^wfx^waftət – Water is our relation - Syilx Okanagan Nation DECLARE A WATERSHED EMERGENCY

May 15, 2026

WHEREAS: The Syilx Okanagan Nation has governed and cared for our lands and waters since time immemorial under Syilx laws, customs, *capik^wł*, and *nsyilxcən* teachings, carrying the sacred responsibility and jurisdiction to protect and care for *siwłk^w*-water and all living things for future generations, as affirmed through Syilx governance, knowledge systems, and the Syilx *siwłk^w* Declaration (2014); and,

WHEREAS: *siwłk^w*-water is a living relative essential to the health of lands, ecosystems, and all communities; and,

WHEREAS: Elders and knowledge holders across the Syilx territory have observed alarming and accelerating changes, including:

- Early hot temperatures,
- No snow in upper elevations,
- Unusually dry upper watershed creeks, springs, and wetlands,
- Increasing water temperatures and ecosystem stress,
- Indicator plant species like *spiłəm*—bitterroot dying early,
- *x^wəx^wmına?*—Rainbow Trout suffering with low flows in Mission Creek and other tributaries; and

WHEREAS: Snowpacks as of May 1, 2026, range from 9% to 69% of normal across watersheds in Syilx territory, which means reduced stream flows, low water supply, increased stress on aquatic systems, low salmon returns, and increased fire hazard this year.

WHEREAS: These conditions constitute a cultural, ecological, and governance emergency threatening drinking water, fish, wildlife, food systems, cultural practices, local economies, and the long-term wellbeing of communities throughout the Okanagan, Nicola, Similkameen, Kettle, Salmon, and Besette watersheds; and,

WHEREAS: Current governance and management systems have failed to adequately prioritize, resource, and protect watershed health in the Southern Interior of British Columbia—compounded by the fact that currently there is insufficient knowledge of headwater conditions, groundwater interactions, and cumulative watershed impacts to support responsible decision-making; and,

WHEREAS: The Syilx Okanagan Nation has already demonstrated watershed collaboration leadership through initiatives including the return of salmon, Fish Water Management Tool, Okanagan River Restoration Initiative, the Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table, and the establishment of a long-term vision and call for intergenerational stewardship and systemic change in the 250-Year Okanagan Similkameen Watershed Responsibility Plan; and,

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Sylx Okanagan Nation
DECLARE A WATERSHED EMERGENCY**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. **The Sylx Okanagan Nation formally declares a Watershed Emergency** across the Okanagan, Nicola, Similkameen, Kettle, Salmon and Bessette watersheds in response to accelerating watershed decline, drought, ecosystem stress, and increasing threats to water security.
2. **The Sylx Nation reaffirms its inherent rights, responsibilities, and jurisdiction to protect, restore, and care for siwłk^w** in accordance with Sylx law, knowledge systems, governance, and the siwłk^w Water Declaration.
3. **In response to the 2026 Watershed Emergency, the Province of British Columbia and all relevant agencies are called upon to take immediate emergency actions including:**
 - a. Establish a moratorium on issuing any further surface water and groundwater licences;
 - b. Put all licensees on notice that they will be required to reduce their water use;
 - c. Establish a co-governance forum between the Sylx Nation and BC to monitor and assess water scarcity in the region;
 - d. Include local governments at the table with the understanding that they play a pivotal role in water management;
 - e. Recognize fish protection flows at which the Province will issue an emergency protection order;
4. **All levels of government are further called upon to prioritize long-term watershed protection and climate adaptation in the Southern Interior of British Columbia through:**
 - a. Restoration and protection of wetlands, riparian areas, springs, floodplains, and aquatic habitats;
 - b. Climate adaptation planning grounded in Sylx laws, knowledge systems, and Western science;
 - c. Long-term investment in First Nations-led watershed stewardship, governance, and monitoring capacity;
 - d. Cross-jurisdictional collaboration that reflects the interconnected nature of watersheds and shared responsibility for water quality and quantity; and
 - e. Land use and zoning policies that protect the natural function and movement of creeks, floodplains, lakes, wetlands, springs, groundwater, and riparian areas.
5. **All water users—agriculture, industry, municipalities, and the public—share a responsibility to:**
 - a. Immediately reduce water use and waste;
 - b. Prevent pollution and contamination of water sources;
 - c. Support watershed restoration and conservation efforts; and
 - d. Respect ecological limits and Sylx Okanagan rights and responsibilities.

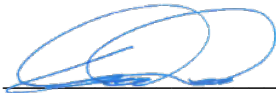
FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED:

6. **A coordinated watershed-scale approach shall be advanced through initiatives including:**
 - a. The Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table;
 - b. The 250-Year Okanagan Similkameen Watershed Responsibility Plan; and
 - c. Other collaborative processes that support long-term watershed resilience and intergenerational stewardship, and;

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FINALLY IT BE RESOLVED;

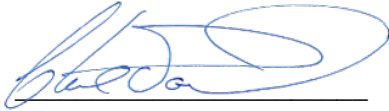
- 7. **This resolution serves as a formal call to action for governments, organizations, industry, and communities to work in true partnership with the Syilx Nation** through shared decision-making, accountability, and urgent collective action as the Syilx Nation commits to taking continued leadership and Unity to uphold responsibilities to future generations and all living things.



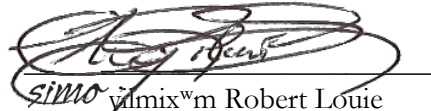
Sil-teekin yilmix^wm Greg Gabriel
Penticton Indian Band



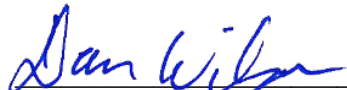
kal'Nupagn yilmix^wm Keith Crow
Lower Similkameen Indian Band



ki law na yilmix^wm Clarence Louie
Osoyoos Indian Band



SIMO yilmix^wm Robert Louie
Westbank First Nation



yilmix^wm Dan Wilson
Okanagan Indian Band



yilmix^wm Dan Manuel
Upper Nicola Indian Band

yilmix^wm Charlie Allison
Upper Similkameen Indian Band